

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00  
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
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STR-04 /087 W

-----181717Z 124943 /47

O 181605Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9884

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 1531

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN FROM LANDAU

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PA

SUBJ: THE PRESIDENT'S OAS SPEECH

REF: STATE 084912

1. FOR PARAGUAY THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THE PRESIDENT'S OAS SPEECH WAS THE REAFFIRMATION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS COUPLED WITH A CLEAR EMPHASIS ON NON-PUNITIVE AND MULTILATERAL MEASURES. THE SPEECH OFFERED THE KIND OF FLEXIBILITY WHICH WOULD ALLOW PARAGUAY THE CHANCE TO MAKE REQUIRED REFORMS WITHOUT SEEMING TO DO SO UNDER IMMINENT THREAT OF SANCTIONS. IF WE AND PARAGUAY ARE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THIS POSTURE WE MAY SEE SOME REAL PROGRESS IN HUMAN RIGHTS HERE.

2. THE IMMEDIATE REACTION TO THE SPEECH WAS THEREFORE ONE OF RELIEF THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR CRITICISM OR (FROM THEIR STANDPOINT) FORCED TO THROW IN THEIR LOT WITH THEIR MORE HIGHLY OFFENDED SOUTHERN CONE NEIGHBORS, AND FIND THEMSELVES IN DIRECT CONFRONTATION  
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WITH THE U.S. OVER HUMAN RIGHTS. UP TO NOW THE PREVAILING FEELING WAS THAT SINCE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. SEEMED TO BE DOOMED ANYWAY, WHEN THE TIME CAME IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO GO DOWN FIGHTING.

3. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT WE ARE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS. UNDER THE LAST ADMINISTRATION THE PRESTIGE AND CREDI-

BILITY OF THE U.S. AND ITS REPRESENTATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA SUFFERED BECAUSE OF THE GAP BETWEEN WHAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND OUR EMBASSIES SAID OR PROMISED, AND WHAT CONGRESS DID OR FAILED TO DO. NOW THAT THE PRESIDENT BELONGS TO THE SAME PARTY AS THE MAJORITY IN CONGRESS, WHAT IS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER IS THAT THE USG AS A WHOLE SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE.

4. I CANNOT HELP BUT WONDER IF THE SENSIBLE APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS ENUNCIATED IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO CONGRESS; WHETHER IN THE END THE REACTION IN PARAGUAY (FOR INSTANCE) MAY PROVE TO HAVE BEEN WRONG IN SUPPOSING THAT CONFRONTATION COULD BE AVOIDED. CAN THE ADMINISTRATION SELL ITS APPROACH TO CONGRESS?

5. THIS HAS PRACTICAL, OPERATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS. WHEN I RECENTLY RAISED WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER THE IMPORTANCE OF PARAGUAY'S RECEIVING THE IAHRM MISSION, HE WONDERED ALOUD WHY BOTHER IF IN THE END THE USG WOULD TAKE PUNITIVE STEPS AGAINST PARAGUAY ANYWAY. THE QUESTION IS BEING PUT TO STROESSNER TODAY AND IT IS AT LEAST POSSIBLE STROESSNER MAY NOW AUTHORIZE AN IAHRM VISIT, INFLUENCED BY THE TONE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECH. IF WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS CONGRESS SHOULD DECIDE TO "PUNISH" PARAGUAY, ALONG THE LINES OF KOCH'S PRESS STATEMENT OF APRIL 15, THEN WHATEVER POSITIVE INFLUENCE THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH MAY HAVE HAD WILL HAVE BEEN VITIATED.

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6. TO ME THIS ILLUSTRATES A DILEMMA AND A CHALLENGE FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. I HEARTILY SUPPORT THE LINE THE PRESIDENT HAS ADOPTED. I THINK IT GIVES YOU AND YOUR CHIEFS OF MISSION IN THE FIELD WHO SUPPORT YOU WHAT WE NEED TO PUSH HARD AND EFFECTIVELY TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE IN THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE THE IDEA OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS STILL FAIRLY NOVEL. THERE IS NO QUESTION IN MY MIND THAT WE ALL KNOW WHAT WASHINGTON WANTS AND ARE PREPARED TO WORK DILIGENTLY TO ACHIEVE THE PRESIDENT'S PURPOSES; NOR IS THERE ANY QUESTION IN MY MIND THAT THIS COUNTRY WHERE I AM NOW SERVING (AND, I BELIEVE, ITS EQUALLY TAINTED NEIGHBORS) HAVE GOT THE MESSAGE LOUD AND CLEAR. BUT WHAT ABOUT CONGRESS?

7. THE CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCATES OF STERN OLD TESTAMENTAL PUNISHMENT MAY WELL BE PROVEN RIGHT IN THE END, BUT BEFORE APPLYING HARKIN-TYPE PUNITIVE MEASURES

I THINK WE SHOULD GIVE THE PRESIDENT'S APPROACH A  
CHANCE TO WORK. THIS MEANS GIVING US IN THE FIELD A  
CHANCE TO DO OUR JOB; AND IT MEANS GIVING THE COUNTRIES  
INVOLVED A CHANCE TO REACT POSITIVELY TO THE CLEAR  
SIGNALS IN THE PRESIDENT'S OAS SPEECH.

8. THE KEY RIGHT NOW, I THINK, IS SELLING THE SPEECH  
TO CONGRESS.

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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
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